



6-15-2000

## Rondo

Richard Dixon

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Dixon, Richard (2000) "Rondo," *Westview*: Vol. 19 : Iss. 2 , Article 8.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol19/iss2/8>

This Fiction is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).



# Rondo

by Richard Dixon

He ran into them, after nearly twenty years. He always knew it would happen, that it was only a matter of time, in the town where the three of them lived. He didn't dread it, never dreaded it, but still did not relish a meeting, an encounter after nearly two decades of subconscious avoidance.

The three of them, he and this married couple, were now as they had been for a long time: strangers. They now had nothing in common, but he knew they would behave as if there were still common threads, as if they were still friends, and he did not want to go through that pretense. Maybe dread was lurking after all, like a shark swimming in silence, ever-watchful for his next meal. Hungry. Long ago, all relevant feelings had been flushed from him, and as far as the married couple concerned him, he was now threadbare.

The mutuality they once shared was that he had been married to her best friend and they had socialized on a regular basis, and gotten close, within the socially acceptable limits, he writing a heart-felt poem for their then-three-year-old son, and they had duly loved it. And he, sharing a keen interest in songwriting with the husband of his wife's best friend, whom he genuinely liked, a nice guy married to a social pretender.

Then, shockingly short-lived, his marriage had unraveled with the speed of someone's lifelong wishes coming to a sudden dead-end. Her dreams and desires had turned over, as lake water turns over in the late summer when the algae dies from lack of oxygen.

His then-wife had decided, as if out of the clear blue, that what he had to offer was not, after all, part of her long-range future plans. Those plans had changed dramatically, and now involved her becoming a latter-day saint and a mother to several children, and all of it the quicker the better. The marriage was over in three years, two really;

it had taken another ten months to work out the logistics—no attorneys for the divorce, the selling of the house and division of the proceeds, a decision on the damn dog. She had wasted no time, getting re-married within five months (the state law says a divorce isn't final for six months, but who's paying attention?), and moving to Australia where, at last count, she was a latter-day mother of four ... and counting.

The only common thread he now shared with these people, this married couple from the past, was that their younger children and his twelve-year-old son attended the same school, which is where he ran into them, as he (and his current wife) were leaving the building, during middle-school Open House Night. He was walking out as they were walking in, he recognized them in an instant from fifty feet away and, as soon as they saw him it took a few moments for their expressions to turn from fuzzy to clear, a few seconds for the masks of insincerity to drop and the fake smiles put into place.

He felt he had no choice except to stop and visit, but he also began to go through the tentative choreography that was already taking shape in his mind, a simple series of dance steps, the ultimate goal of which was to get the hell out of there. They exchanged pleasantries and information, and tried, futile as it was, to fill each other in on the last twenty years of their lives, and he already knew that was an impossibility, as close to without a purpose as, well, those several lonely years he had spent without a single word from them, those lonely years he had spent and they couldn't be *bothered*.

And now, what: encore time? Sorry, too much else going on in his life, he had a *life* now. He found himself stepping carefully around them, but slowly, trying to disengage from this discomfort. He found himself stepping slowly around them, smoothly, without being abrupt or rude, as if he were doing some kind of solitary, weird waltz, one that he'd



been doing his whole life. An odd thought: he used to enjoy being around these two people, but now he saw it for all the insincerities, charades, and superficial status-quos, he saw it for the veiled, improbable love-thing he used to have for his ex-wife, and all else be damned; he saw it for the doomed duet it had always been.

He saw an opening, made the first move away from them, and to his disbelief, it looked as if they

were doing the same. No fools they; they knew a short encounter when they saw one. He took a few more steps away, *gliding* now, like a country dancer, a little bit corny, but it was a graceful shuffle, bidding goodbyes and nice to see ya's. A graceful shuffle, almost a professional two-step, leading him out the front door, back to where time and distance came together, and there he danced.

\*\*\*



Photo by Joel Kendall